

# **BEYOND THE WALLS: MULTIPLY YOUR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

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**This is a resource in the Leadership and Skill Development  
category of the Christian Growth Study Plan.**

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LifeWay Christian Resources

One LifeWay Plaza

Nashville, Tennessee 37234

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# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## CHAPTER 1: CALLED TO SERVE

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### Called to Serve

In a Children's Sunday School training conference, Walter, retired from a major airline, spoke through his tears: "Until yesterday, I had planned to attend the adult conferences today. Last night, God reminded me of the importance of Sunday School in the lives of children. When I was 11, I was invited to go to Sunday School with a friend. My folks never went to church and never said much about God around the house. That day in Sunday School, I heard about Jesus and His love for me. Though I had never heard that before, something moved my heart. I wanted to know more about this Jesus. For much of that Sunday, I thought about what the teacher had said.

My friend never asked me to go again, and no one from the church ever called me. I guess I just got lost in the activities of the next week. It wasn't long before the stirring in my heart grew faint. Fortunately, I eventually asked Jesus into my life as my Savior. Unfortunately, I was 27 years old at the time. During those 16 years without God, my life was filled with immorality and emptiness. Sixteen years wasted! I'm thankful for what God has done, but I wish I could have all those years back. At 11, I was so ready and open to accept the truth, but nobody called. I can't let that happen to another child."

### Moment 2 Reflect

Relate a time from your childhood when you sensed God's movement in your life.

What adults ministered to you at that time?

After Walter's testimony, almost everyone in the room was in tears. Through this quiet man, God issued a powerful challenge to reach children. God graphically reminded each person in the conference of the child's sensitivity to spiritual

matters, the movement of God in the hearts of children preparing them to meet Him, and God's plan to use people in His wonderful work of redemption. That is what Children's Sunday School is all about.

In thousands of churches, adults of all ages spend time with children in Sunday School. A walk in the hallways of those churches on Sunday morning would reveal a variety of attitudes displayed by those adults.

- Jim, a business executive despite heavy responsibilities throughout the week, is a bundle of energy on most Sunday mornings. With a look of excitement on his face, he makes his way to a crowded room of second graders. Why is he there?
- Sharon is a busy, at-home mom with five children. She occasionally looks a little frazzled on Sunday morning, but who could blame her? Her dependability and faithfulness to the task of teaching children is unquestionable. Why is she there?
- Nancy is a grandmother who cares for several grandchildren during the week while their parents work. She has been teaching children in Sunday School for more years than she really wants to remember. If anyone could be justified in saying, "I've done my part!"; it would be Nancy. Why is she still there?

Whether this is your first year to teach children in Sunday School or your fiftieth, you, too, must answer the question, "Why are you there?" Some answers given might include:

- "There was no one else and I just couldn't say no."
- "I wasn't doing anything else and felt guilty."
- "The person asking was so persistent, he finally wore my resistance down."

Do you notice anything these responses have in common? They lack an element that absolutely is essential to the effective ministry of teaching children. What do you think that one missing ingredient is?

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If you answered “a call from God,” you are right on target. Understanding that God has issued a call to this ministry and has provided the gifts needed to effectively serve Him in the task is necessary for success. That sense of call may not always be present as the teaching journey begins, but it must show up soon, or the task will become a burden.

Maybe you did not hear a clear call from God when you accepted this teaching assignment and your motives were similar to those given earlier. If that is the case, seek God’s help in understanding His call on your life. See this year’s training experience and ministry with children as an opportunity for God to reveal His wonderful plan for you. It just might be that you are exactly where He wants you. If so, you can join the ranks of Jim, Sharon, Nancy, Walter, and thousands of other children’s Bible teachers who see each Sunday as an opportunity to teach the good news, rather than as an hour of obligation that someone has to do.

Throughout the history of Christianity, children have needed concerned, committed, called adults to help them understand the truth of God. That was God’s plan. As a whole, today’s children receive little spiritual instruction outside of their Sunday morning experience. With the hectic pace of family life, many parents spend little time in religious instruction. Our culture is filled with spiritual misinformation and outright lies. The children in your church and community are dependent on others to point the way to the truth. Children are not designed to figure out these issues on their own. Direction and instruction help set them on the right path.

Every teacher of children is a vessel through whom God will pour His truth into the lives of children. So get ready to man those scissors, squirt that glue, open those Bibles, sing those songs, work those puzzles, move those chairs, and receive an immeasurable blessing. Sunday School 2002 is just around the bend, and the kids are awaitin’!

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## CHAPTER 2: HOW DO I HAVE A SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY SCHOOL?

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Success in Sunday School begins with the attitude of the teacher. Let's take a brief look at the approaches of some typical Children's Sunday School teachers. The names have been changed to protect the guilty.

- Mr. Absent Arnold shows very little commitment to the task. He is frequently out on Sunday morning. If he has ever called anyone to let them know, the message has yet to be received. When he does decide to show up, he spends half of his time at the coffeepot and the other half telling the children in his class the most recent sports news. To his credit, he does eventually read a Bible verse and give the children his weak understanding of God's Word. Needless to say, success in Sunday School is not high on his agenda.
- Unlike Absent Arnold, Mrs. Dependable Doris is always there on Sunday morning. Doris is present, accounted for, but unprepared. She enters the building on Sunday with a frantic look. After dropping off her purse and Bible in the classroom, she hurries to the resource room. As she fumbles with the construction paper, craft sticks, and glue, you can almost hear her thinking, "What can I do with this?" Finally, with a basket full of ideas, she returns to the room. The children really like Doris. She is loads of fun, always there, and has interesting activity ideas. Unfortunately, the ideas are not always related to the lesson. Her understanding of success needs some work.
- Committed Carol (and the Committed Carls) enters the building ready to teach. She has studied the Bible story, gathered the resources for the learning activity, and talked with the Lord. In one church, 40 to 50 teachers gather on Wednesday night to plan the next Sunday's session and to get their rooms prepared. On one occasion, a principal and the children's minister walked the hall together outside classrooms where more than 300 children and teachers were meeting for Sunday School. "Unless you looked into the rooms, you could never tell this floor was filled with children. They are so involved." What an observation! Those teachers were experiencing success in Sunday School. Perfection? No! Success? Yes!

Several principles of success can be discovered by observing the teaching ministry of the Committed Carols and Carls. These principles certainly are not the only elements needed in building a successful Sunday School, but they are foundational.

### **Principle #1: Successful Children's Sunday School experiences are led by teachers who have been called by God to this ministry.**

The principle of a call from God to teach children was introduced earlier. However, it is so important that a broader discussion is necessary at this point. A call from God, not the nominating committee, is a prerequisite for success in any ministry. Why do the adults mentioned earlier choose planning meetings at church on Wednesday nights over a comfortable recliner at home after a tough day at work? Why do they head to a class filled with challenging children instead of to a peaceful lake on a beautiful summer Sunday morning? The answer is simple: They believe God wants them to teach children and has called them to the task.

These concerned adults are there because they want every child to build a foundation for responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit when He moves at the appropriate time in the child's life. These adults choose the eternal over the temporary. They are there because they want children to know the truth and live the truth, thus avoiding many of the heartaches disobedience brings. These adults choose truth over lies. They are there because they want children to have something solid to stand on when the difficulties of life come their way. These adults choose the solid rock over the shifting sand. These Committed Carols and Carls have a big picture of God, working in the life of every child to restore each one to a relationship with Him. Pretty big stuff, don't you think? Yeah, but it's the big stuff that keeps these committed teachers coming week after week.

God's Word supports the call to teach children. In Deuteronomy 6:7, Moses instructed the people of Israel to keep God's commandments and to "impress them on your children." According to *The New American Commentary*, the image pictured here is that of an engraver, using a hammer and chisel to etch a text into a stone. The task is hard labor, but once the engraving is completed, the message is there to stay. God called His people, Israel, to teach children in such a memorable way that the message of

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His commands would never be forgotten. As His people in 2002, we inherit the call to teach our children—to impress His commands on them in unforgettable ways. The Father initiates the call to teach.

### Moment 2 Reflect

What are some messages you would like to chisel into the lives of the children you teach?

Through both His words and example, Jesus, the Son of God, affirms the call to teach. Jesus was called “Teacher” more than any other title. As He prepared to ascend to heaven at the end of His resurrection appearances, He spoke the words that have become known as the Great Commission. That voice of authority echoed from the mountaintop, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20).

Under the inspiration of God, Paul explained that the body of Christ is made up of many parts, and each part is gifted by the Spirit to serve the body. “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). In that same chapter, Paul later listed “teachers” (v. 28) as one specific area of giftedness. The Father initiates the call to teach, the Son affirms the call through Word and example, and the Spirit empowers the believer to fulfill the call. There really is no question that God wants this teaching business to be done. For success in our teaching ministry, we must hear and respond to His call.

**Principle #2: Successful Children’s Sunday School experiences are led by teachers who are growing in their understanding of today’s children.**

The learning process involves a dialogue between the teacher and learner. That dialogue is enhanced when the teacher understands the learner. Such understanding forms the basis for the learning approaches used in the teaching-learning experience. Children have unique cultural and developmental characteristics that influence the approaches used to teach them. Adults who are called to teach children God’s Word must be growing in their own understanding of today’s children. There are several ways teachers can become more effective in a Bible-teaching ministry with children.

- **Get in touch with children by taking a stroll down the memory lane of your own childhood.**

Though the words “children are not miniature adults” are often spoken in the context of conversations about children’s ministry, many adults have a hard time fully understanding the impact of this truth. How many years has it been since you were a child? Most adults working with children have been thinking like adults for many years. Adult thinking is very different from childlike thinking. For the next few minutes, use these suggestions as thought probes to help you remember some things about your childhood:

- a house you lived in,
- a joyful school experience,
- a frustrating or painful school experience,
- childhood games or secret clubs,
- a difficult skill to learn,
- a family tradition,
- a sad experience,
- some good friends, and
- your church experience.

### Moment 2 Reflect

Find a partner and take turns talking about your memories. Remember, make attempts to get in touch with how you felt and thought about these things as a child.

- **Know what the world of today’s child is like.**

Though children of all generations have much in common,

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each generation faces unique situations that influence the development of those children. Today's children are growing up in a difficult time. In several recent conferences on teaching, participants were asked to respond to the question, "What is the world teaching children?" Their answers included:

- How you look is most important.
- Take care of #1 first.
- Worth is equal to possessions.
- Success is equal to money and things.
- Do what you want to do.
- If you're not popular, you're not important.
- You shouldn't have to wait or wait for anything.
- You deserve what you want immediately.

### Moment 2 Reflect

Those were just a few of many comments from concerned adults. What would you add to the list?

The world's messages to children—let's call them "shifting sand"—can be categorized in several life philosophies. After you have read the following list, number the items in the priority in which they affect the lives of the children you teach (1=most influential, 8=least influential). Circle the one you believe most affects your own thinking and behavior.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Humanism—You not only can be, but you deserve to be, anything you want to be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Materialism—True happiness is measured by the abundance of your possessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pluralism—There is more than one kind of ultimate truth because all beliefs are of equal value.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hedonism—Personal happiness is the chief goal of life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cynicism—People cannot be trusted, and the future is rather bleak.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sportsism—Success in life is based on your ability to play some game well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doism—What you can do or achieve is more important than who you are.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Relativism—What is right is determined by what you believe to be most important.

The same conference participants were asked to give a percentage estimate of a child's waking hours spent receiving these "shifting sand" messages. On an average, they estimated approximately 75 percent. If that evaluation is accurate, the children in our culture are being intensively fed life messages that will lead to their destruction. Jesus gave the picture of a man building his house on sand (Luke 6:48-49). That is exactly what is seen happening in the lives of today's children. Their "life houses" are being built on "shifting sand" messages.

In *The Bridger Generation*, Thom Rainer lists a "1992-93 Nielsen Report on Television" that indicates kids 12 and under watch 23 hours of television each week. In grades 1-6 at school, that would amount to 7,176 hours. Since many of the television messages agree with the "shifting sand" messages, the potentially negative influence is enormous. To give a more accurate view of the situation, let's add some additional figures that are more educated guesses than exact research. What if the same kids spent the following time segments with these various influencing agents:

- video games—two hours weekly,
- radio/music—four hours weekly,
- books/magazines—two hours weekly,
- movies (video rental or theatre)—two hours weekly, and
- unchristian role models—one hour weekly?

These are probably conservative numbers. If you disagree, just plug in your own numbers to complete this exercise. Using these estimates, children spend another 3,432 hours being influenced by "shifting sand" messages. The total time for television and "other influences" is 10,608 hours.

Dr. Rainer goes on to give the top 10 influences that are shaping contemporary kids:

- disappearance of the security web (supportive family, neighbors, and schools);
- overattention to their generation—as large as the baby boomers generation;
- economic uncertainty;
- emergence of a media generation (short attention spans, instant gratification trained);
- preoccupation with rights;
- disappearance of moral boundaries. In response to the statement "No one can be absolutely positive that they

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know the truth,” 80 percent agreed, 19 percent disagreed, and 1 percent was not sure;

- rising violence;
- vanishing gender roles;
- rapid change driven by high technology; and
- devaluation of life.

### Moment 2 Reflect

After reading this information, how do you feel about the future of today’s children?

Just for the sake of evaluation, let’s create an ideal Christian family. For those same 6 years of childhood, this family attends Sunday School and worship every Sunday, spends 10 minutes a day in prayer as a family, and spends 15 minutes in family and/or individual spiritual time each day. The children in this ideal family would receive 1,536 hours of “solid rock” life messages. Remember, this is Mr. and Mrs. Ideal, and most of our children are not being raised in families like this. Were you alarmed with the huge difference between 10,608 and 1,536?

At this point, many teachers might be tempted to throw up their hands in a “What’s the use?” attitude. The situation appears so out of balance, surely it is hopeless to try. If we only had our abilities and strengths as weapons, the proper response would be “RETREAT!”

However, that is not the case. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-13. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth and Ephesus to encourage their labor for the Lord. Surely those Christians felt outnumbered and overwhelmed, living in such a pagan culture. God inspired Paul to point out their abilities, in Him, to “demolish strongholds” and “stand your ground.” This same message must be heard by contemporary Christians. The battle is difficult, but the victory belongs to the people of God. With His weapons of warfare and divine affirmation, children’s teachers can storm today’s cultural strongholds and raise the victory banner for the truth of God.

Does what you do as a Bible teacher for children really matter? You had better believe it does! The children coming

into your classrooms are being influenced by these cultural circumstances every day. They desperately need the stability of the Word of God. Understanding these cultural factors that influence children and the power of God’s Word over them, you can develop a successful Bible-teaching ministry to meet the needs of boys and girls in your church and community.

### • Gain knowledge related to basic age-group characteristics.

It should go without saying that first graders and sixth graders are significantly different. However, adults can easily fall into the trap of treating all ages the same. The following characteristics provide a beginning point for understanding what each age group is generally like. As you read each list, write the name of a child you know beside each characteristic. Add your observations about children to each list of age-group characteristics.

#### 1st and 2nd Graders . . .

- are active learners;
- are full of energy;
- have surface-level emotions (easy tears or laughter);
- still like to be hugged (most of them);
- are becoming more fascinated with peers, but parents are still close resources;
- enjoy informal play without many rules;
- are susceptible to imaginary fears;
- show their feelings in behavior rather than words;
- are not fully developed in their fine motor skills;
- are concrete thinkers who do not understand symbolic language;
- readily accept adult instruction;
- enjoy Bible stories;
- have short attention spans;
- have limited reading skills;
- are eager to learn; and
- need activities in which they can be successful.

#### 3rd and 4th Graders . . .

- enjoy games with exact rules;
- are more group-focused and loyal to the group;
- have a greater dislike for the opposite sex;
- are increasing in self-confidence due to growth in mental and physical abilities;



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- are generally cooperative and responsive to authority;
- have a stable activity level;
- are active learners who need involvement in the learning process;
- are achievement oriented;
- still find symbolic language a challenge;
- enjoy sports and competitive games;
- maintain focus on a learning activity more easily;
- may tease others;
- readily accept Bible truths;
- enjoy choices in the learning environment;
- have more intense friendships;
- like fair play and demand adherence to the rules;
- don't like adult guidance when they can do it themselves; and
- are spiritually sensitive.

### Preteens . . .

- are more argumentative;
  - are less cooperative;
  - reject things considered childish;
  - experience that girls change faster than boys;
  - experience physical changes related to puberty that can cause anxiety;
  - are willing to admit an interest in the opposite sex;
  - are sensitive to criticism and may be quick tempered;
  - are increasingly concerned about appearance;
  - question adult teaching;
  - ask probing questions;
  - can think and reason on much deeper levels;
  - memorize easily;
  - make the shift from concrete to abstract thinking;
  - have a better understanding of symbolic language;
  - desire to be like their peers;
  - feel an intense need to be accepted by their peers;
  - need acceptance and encouragement by adults;
  - dislike outward displays of affection; and
  - are usually ready for spiritual decisions.
- **Understand and practice effective approaches for guiding the behavior of children in your class/department.**

For a learning environment to be successful, control and guidance must be present. Though children are encouraged to make personal choices within the teaching-learning

setting, adults should set the boundaries within which those choices are made. Children also need help knowing and exhibiting appropriate behavior in the classroom.

Consider implementing these guidelines as you work toward building a successful Sunday School experience:

- Develop a positive attitude in your role as teacher.
- Strive to maintain peace in your life. Bringing personal irritations and anger into the classroom can create problems in your relationships with the children.
- Use teaching methods that allow the children to be active and make choices.
- Avoid long lectures or moralizing. Keep your corrections simple and to the point.
- Provide a balance in your teaching. Don't become predictable and boring.
- Evaluate the activities used each week. A bored or uninterested child often can become a behavior problem.
- Focus on the children and not the lesson.
- Avoid labeling children by their behavior. Children believe and often become what adults say about them.
- Recognize the spiritual dimension in the lives of the children you teach.
- Build a positive relationship with each child.
- Speak in a calm, firm voice.
- Give specific directions for classroom expectations and provide only real choices.
- Reinforce positive behavior more than you correct the negative.
- Avoid comparing children as a means of controlling behavior.
- Model the behavior you desire to see in the children.
- Allow the children to help establish limits and be consistent in maintaining those limits.
- Use the environment to help manage behavior. Music can help set moods or identify changes in the teaching procedures.
- Look children in the eyes as you speak to them.
- Accept the natural differences in children. Expecting all children to be calm and mild mannered can make you overreact to the assertive, expressive child.
- Be overprepared. Always have more activities than can be completed in one session.
- Arrive before the children.
- Provide opportunities for emotional release. Children



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who have experienced an emotional tension over the past week can be helped to release some of that tension through physical outlets. Simple activities like manipulating clay or tearing scrap paper for one minute can benefit children under stress.

- Use overhearing to affirm expectations. Encourage children who behave appropriately, and make sure the other children hear your encouragements. Once again, don't compare the group to the child.
- Remember that outward behavior can be an indication of internal need. Pray about and look for the need in a child who frequently repeats inappropriate behavior.

### **Principle #3: Successful Children's Sunday School experiences are built on teaching methods that match the ways children learn.**

The central goal in the Christian education of children is to help each child gain knowledge and understanding of God's Word. This will help lead him to the experience of personal salvation and the imitation of Jesus in both attitudes and actions. Such a goal reflects the words of Jesus as He commanded those early Christians to "go, make disciples, and teach." The learning environment for children must establish and maintain this goal with vigilance. Teaching-learning activities that only focus on the facts of Bible knowledge are anemic. Jesus told the Pharisees that they knew the Scriptures but did not understand the power of God's Word. That life-changing, transforming power is evidenced only when an individual truly learns God's Word. On the other hand, teaching-learning activities that focus primarily on attitudes and behaviors ignore the foundational need to know specific Bible content.

Facts and experience work together in the process of making disciples. Disciples of Jesus are those who know what He said and model His lifestyle in their attitudes and actions. The disciple has learned the message when it influences how he thinks and acts.

How do we help children learn the life-changing message of Jesus?

- We must model what we teach. Children learn from the example of significant adults. The adage that more is caught than taught speaks volumes to our approaches in teaching children. It is imperative that children see their teachers practicing what they preach.
- We must be learners ourselves. The teacher who is not

being changed on a weekly, maybe even daily, basis enters the learning environment minus an important teaching tool, a life in touch with the Living God. Teaching from the overflow of knowing that God has worked in your life sends a powerful message to those you teach. Suddenly the words of the Bible come off the page and take human form. They become real in you and provide the child an exciting picture of God at work. It is impossible to be boring and uninteresting after the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth has touched your life.

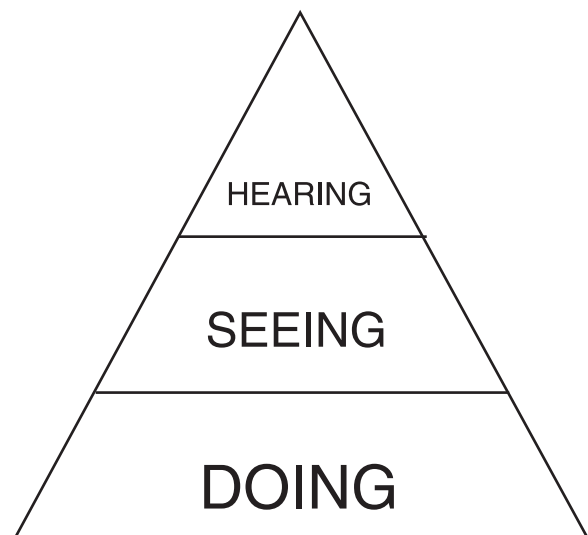
- We have to understand the different ways children learn. It is not too difficult to look at children and see those outward differences. However, understanding that these same children have different ways to learn can cause us frustration. Well, how do they learn?

Three concepts help adults understand how children learn; Learning Pyramid, Circle of Learning, and Learning Approaches.

### **Learning Pyramid**

Children learn by hearing, seeing, and doing. Effective learning occurs when these three avenues are in proper order. Look at the illustration on this page. Notice that the base of the pyramid is the largest part of the structure. What

## LEARNING PYRAMID



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comprises this section?

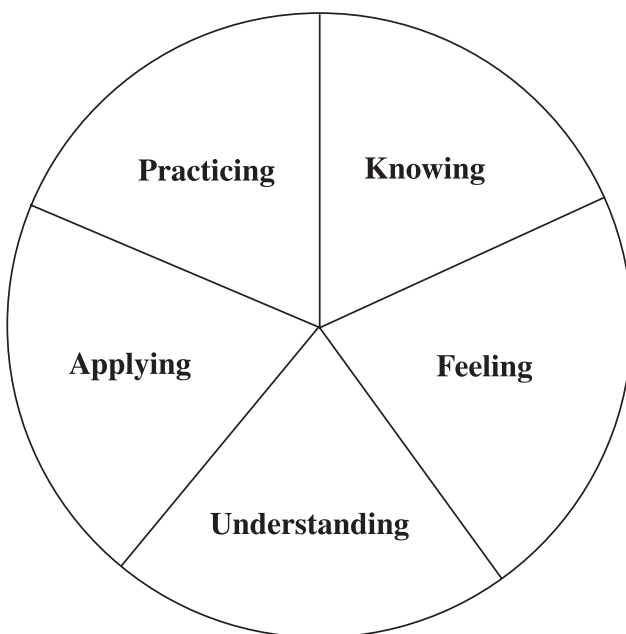
What does that say about the importance of “doing” in the teaching-learning experience?

Think of a recent learning experience in your life. Did you have to do something to finally learn the skill? As you teach children each week, keep them involved. If you turn the pyramid upside down so that “hearing” forms the base, the structure is very unbalanced. Use all the avenues—doing, seeing, and hearing—as you teach children, but keep the foundation of “doing.”

### Circle of Learning

The process of learning can be described as a circle consisting of five parts: knowing, feeling, understanding, applying, and practicing. Effective teaching helps children deal with each part of the circle as they learn a Bible truth. Too often, teachers believe a child has learned the Bible truth if he can recite a memory verse or recall facts related to the Bible story or passage. Only the “knowing” part of the circle is covered by these methods. However, until the truth is evidenced in changed attitudes and actions, learning has not occurred. As you teach children, guide them through every part of the learning circle.

### CIRCLE OF LEARNING



- **Knowing**—Children are introduced to the facts of the Bible story or passage.
- **Feeling**—Children are asked to think about how the people in the story might have felt. They also are led to think about their feelings in similar situations.
- **Understanding**—Children are guided to express their understanding of the Bible truth contained in the Bible story or passage.
- **Applying**—Children are instructed to think about specific ways the Bible truth applies to their lives.
- **Practicing**—Children are encouraged to implement the specific applications of the Bible truth. In addition, they are reminded to continue practicing the truth as they have opportunity.

Remember, failure to complete the circle of learning hinders the child’s development of Christlike attitudes and actions.

### Learning Approaches

Although all children are active learners and learn best through doing, each child has an individual approach to learning. In other words, not every child likes the same activities. Because of these learning preferences, methods used to teach children should be varied.

Consider the following approaches as you plan teaching-learning activities for your children.

- **Verbal**—Prefers activities that use language to express ideas and interact with others
- **Logical**—Prefers activities that use reasoning and logic to solve problems
- **Visual**—Prefers activities that allow the child to express ideas through drawing and pictures
- **Physical**—Prefers activities that require physical movement and coordination
- **Musical**—Prefers activities that involve music, rhythm, and beat
- **Relational**—Prefers activities that involve interaction with others
- **Reflective**—Prefers activities that require the child to journal ideas and thoughts
- **Natural**—Prefers activities that involve nature

### Moment 2 Reflect

Which one of these learning approaches best describes the way you learn?

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Teachers tend to use learning activities that match their personal preferences. Keep in mind that many of the children you teach will be very different from you. Plan some activities that you normally would not choose to do.

For a more complete presentation of these learning approaches, see pages 36-39 of the book *Teaching Children: Laying Foundations for Faith*.

What implications for teaching children can we discover from these three concepts of how children learn?

- Keep learning activities varied.
- Adjust suggested activities to match the abilities of the children you teach.
- Evaluate activities to determine interest.
- Lead some activities you personally don't enjoy.
- Allow children the freedom to make some choices.
- Provide activities that keep the children involved.
- Keep the flow of the class moving.
- Vary the schedule between active/passive elements.
- Provide activities where children can find success.
- Use concrete words rather than symbolic language.
- Encourage children to use the Bible in class and at home.
- Remember, children are active learners who learn best by doing.

**Principle #4: Successful Children's Sunday School experiences involve the use of a curriculum that is biblically sound and educationally appropriate.**

As Children's Sunday School leaders make decisions about the Bible study curriculum for their children, they need to answer several questions. The following questions are not in any order of priority and are not all-inclusive:

- How many children are in grades 1-6, and how does the number differ within grades?
- What translation of the Bible does your church prefer?
- Is the curriculum in agreement with your church's theology?
- Does the curriculum present Bible content in age-appropriate ways?
- Are a variety of teaching methods used to reach children with different learning styles?
- Do the sessions actively involve the children in learning, and does it encourage children to choose learning

activities in which they will be involved?

- Are resources provided to help teachers improve their teaching skills and understanding of children?
- Are additional resources available to help teachers present the lessons in creative and challenging ways?
- Are the children guided to build personal skills in the use of the Bible?
- Does the curriculum help children build the foundations needed to understand salvation?
- Does the curriculum encourage children to memorize Bible verses and apply those verses in everyday life?
- Do the sessions provide ways to teach children how the Bible content is related to the way they should act?

After answering these and other similar questions, leaders will be well prepared to choose appropriate Bible study curriculum for children.

However your church needs to group the children, appropriate, age-related materials are available from LifeWay Christian Resources. Each piece is developed with the previous questions in mind so that you can be assured of sound theology and effective methodology. To meet the wide range of church needs, LifeWay has two dated curriculum choices for children's Bible study.

LifeWay's *Family Bible Study* series provides both a closely-graded and broadly-graded curriculum for children. One of the unique qualities of *Family Bible Study* is that all age groups (preschool—adult) cover the same lesson theme each week. Though specific Bible passages will, at times, vary to allow adults and youth to deal with more complex issues, the lessons for preschoolers and children will focus on the same theme used in adult and youth but at the level that is best for them. The closely-graded line provides separate leader and learner guides for grades 1-2, 3-4, and Preteen (grades 5-6). These resources use the NIV. The broadly-graded line covers the same lessons but provides one leader guide for grades 1-6. Suggestions are provided in the leader guide for adapting learning experiences for children of different ages. Separate learner guides are provided for grades 1-3 and 4-6. Those who prefer KJV or NIV can use these resources equally well.

Each session in *Family Bible Study* begins with the *Prepare* section. The elements of *Prepare* are *Personal Bible Study* and *Leadership Meeting*. Through *Personal Bible Study*, teachers will experience an interactive study

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## HOW DO I HAVE A SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY SCHOOL? BEYOND THE WALLS

of the Bible passage used to develop the children's lesson. This Bible study is designed for adults and is not intended for use in the session with the children.

*Leadership Meeting* provides planning helps that guide teachers to focus on the mission of the church, the relationships involved in the class, and the lesson to be taught on Sunday.

Sunday morning begins with *Encounter*. In this section, children will encounter God's Word. For children who arrive before Sunday School is scheduled, an early-arrival activity called *Exploration Station* is provided. Ideas for this activity are found in the leader guide. At the time Sunday School is scheduled to begin, the *Power Up* section should start. This section is an engaging, learning experience to help the kids get focused on the Bible truth for the morning. After about 5-10 minutes of *Power Up*, the children will move into *Plug In*. During *Plug In*, the director presents the Bible story, introduces the memory verse, leads the children to pray and sing, and reviews the Bible story. *Plug In* is designed to take approximately 25-30 minutes. As it is concluded, the boys and girls are introduced to the learning activities planned for *Personalize*. In each *Personalize* choice, the children are helped to apply the truth learned in *Plug In*.

The session concludes with the *Continue* section. This part of the session encourages boys and girls and leaders to continue Bible study and Christlike living throughout the coming week.

In the margins of each page are *Gather/Do* sections that help the teacher know the supplies and resources needed to implement each section of the session. Each *Gather/Do* is numbered or labeled to coordinate with a specific section of the session. Teachers will find these guidelines easy to implement on a week-to-week basis.

The *Family Bible Study* resources also include age-group learner guides, leader resource packs, and teaching picture packs. In addition to several helpful session related resource items, the leader pack includes a CD-ROM. The CD includes songs, sounds effects, dramatic presentations, and other exciting learning ideas for the kids. Also on the CD are text files that provide a number of helpful teacher resources for the session. These text files are not necessary to make full use of the curriculum. They simply provide a nice time-saver for users who enjoy computer-generated information.

A second curriculum choice is called *Bible Foundations for Children*. *Bible Foundations* is a dated curriculum with a broadly-graded format. The leader guide provides teaching helps for leaders of children in grades 1-6. A variety of learning activities are provided with adaptations to use the activity with younger or older learners. *Bible Foundations* has separate learner guides for grades 1-3 and 4-6. The leader pack provides additional resources for each session.

*Bible Foundations* is a wonderful resource for churches which may have children in only one learning experience each week. The sessions are designed to provide Bible study, discipleship, and missions education. Each session includes a Bible background section to help teachers understand the passage being used for the day. Planning helps, called *Get Ready*, are provided in the leader guide and the leader pack.

To begin each session, children are involved in an active, engaging learning experience called *Get with It*. This brief activity introduces the learning theme for the lesson and is followed by a large-group Bible study time called *Get into It*. During *Get into It*, children are taught the Bible story for the day. Included in this time are a variety of learning activities including songs, Scripture memorization, questioning, Bible skills experiences, and missions awareness. A small group learning experience, called *Go with It*, follows this section. The learning activities provided in *Go with It* help teachers guide learners to apply to their lives the truths studied in the large-group time. Helping children understand how the truth of God's Word should affect the way they live is an essential element of every Bible-study experience.

Of special interest to those looking for resources for sixth graders is the undated material *Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teenager*. This material provides Bible-learning experiences targeted to sixth graders. The fun, interactive learning approaches are very appealing to this group, who no longer feel like children but have not yet made that transition to the teen years.

As a support for the Bible teaching that happens each week at church, several daily devotional guides are provided for the children. *More* (grades 1-2), *Adventure* (grades 3-4), and *Bible Express* (grades 5-6) are monthly publications. Contemporary, child-centered stories are included with related Bible passages to give each child daily instruction in God's Word.

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## HOW DO I HAVE A SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY SCHOOL? BEYOND THE WALLS

Deciding which curriculum to use with your children is an important responsibility. Understanding the children in your church and the resources available is necessary to make a good match. Providing a sound Bible curriculum and prepared teachers with consistent prayer will produce great results in the spiritual growth of your children.

For your review, the four principles for establishing a successful Sunday School experience follow. In the space provided, write one or more significant ideas you remember about each principle. After completing the exercise, ask God to show you how to improve your teaching ministry in light of each principle.

### Time 2 Evaluate

**Principle #1:** Successful children's Sunday School experiences are led by teachers who have been called by God to this ministry.

**Principle #2:** Successful children's Sunday School experiences are led by teachers who are growing in their understanding of today's children.

**Principle #3:** Successful children's Sunday School experiences are built on teaching methods that match the ways children learn.

**Principle #4:** Successful Children's Sunday School experiences involve the use of a curriculum that is biblically sound and educationally appropriate.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## CHAPTER 3: HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

For a lot of people, evaluation does not come easy. Many people feel that all they need to do is the best they can and then trust God to do the rest. While we as Children's Sunday School teachers do need to strive to do the best we can, we can learn a lot from evaluating our efforts.

The following chapter is a difficult one. Please take time to work through each of the activities included. As you do so, allow God to speak to you as you evaluate yourself and your teaching environment.

### Me, Myself, and I

One of the most critical and important aspects of the Sunday morning experience is you, the teacher. In the space below, list five qualities you feel are needed in a Children's Sunday School teacher.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now compare your list to the list below.

A great Children's Sunday School teacher:

- has a growing relationship with Christ;
- spends time praying for each child by name;
- visits in the home of each child on a regular basis;
- is prepared and on time each Sunday,
- is called to teach children;
- functions as a team player;
- respects children and calls them by their names;
- knows the current trends affecting today's children;
- has a desire to see children and their families come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior; and
- is an active member of the church, attends worship, and speaks positively about the church leadership.

How would you rate yourself? On the following chart, check the box that you feel best describes you. Be honest with yourself; no one else is going to look at the answers you give.

E—excellent, G—good, N—needs work

I have a growing relationship with Christ.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I pray for each child regularly by name.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I visit regularly in the home of each child.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I am prepared and on time each Sunday.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I feel called to teach children.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I am a team player.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I respect and call each child by name.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I know the current trends affecting children.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I desire to see children and their families know	
Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I am an active member of the church.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I attend worship.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
I speak positively of the church leadership.	E <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

How many did you rate Excellent? \_\_\_\_ Good? \_\_\_\_ Needs Work? \_\_\_\_ Look back over your "Needs Work" list. Select one of the characteristics you feel needs to be strengthened. What are some specific things you need to do to improve that area?

For the next month, work on strengthening that area. At the end of the month, come back to the chart and reevaluate yourself. If you have seen improvement, continue to work on the area to reinforce the improvements. Once you feel you have made significant advancements in that area, select another area which needs improvement and begin working on that area. Remember, you cannot change all of the areas in one month. It will take time to achieve a higher level of excellence. Be patient but persistent.

### My Personal Witness

How comfortable are you presenting the plan of salvation to a child? For many adults, talking to a child is not the difficult aspect. The difficulty is making sure the child understand the words that are being used.



# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

Think for a minute. What are some words that the children you teach may have difficulty understanding?

Did you list any of the following words?

- salvation
- profession of faith
- invitation
- sin
- repent
- forgiveness
- believe
- confess
- church membership
- baptism

Those of us who have grown up in church are used to hearing these words. We probably use them on a regular basis at church. But, will our children understand them? As a Children's Sunday School teacher, one of the greatest opportunities you have is to lay foundations for a child to accept Christ when the Holy Spirit leads the child to do so. Did you catch that last part, "When the Holy Spirit leads him to do so"? Some children's teachers feel like they have failed if every child in the department has not accepted Christ by the time she leaves the department. This is not the case. Some children are not ready to accept Christ into their hearts and lives until a much later age. Your task as a teacher is to be faithful, pray for the child, and nurture his growth as God directs.

When God leads a child to the point of asking Him into her life, the following tips will assist you in presenting the plan of salvation to the child.

- **Start with prayer.** Pray for the child on a regular basis before talking with him.
- **Treat each child on an individual basis.** Just because an older sibling accepted Christ at an early age does not mean this child is ready to accept Christ.

- **Be conversational.** Ask questions that require more than a yes/no answer. For example, don't ask, "Do you want to go to heaven?" Almost every child will say yes. Ask instead, "Why do you want to go to heaven?" This will give you more insight into the child's understanding of God's purpose of eternal life.
- **Remember to give the child time to think.** Many of the questions you will be asking require some reflection time. Don't be afraid of silence.
- **Listen carefully to the answers the child gives and respond appropriately.** This will help you gain an understanding of the child's concept of salvation.
- **Keep the conversation simple and on terms the child can understand.** Look back at the words you listed which a child may have a difficult time understanding. Can you define them on a child's level? If not, ask some other teachers to assist you in defining the words for the child.
- **Use the Bible to point out key verses.** What verses would you recommend? Perhaps John 3:16; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; and Romans 10:9-10 would help.
- **Pray with the child.** If you sense the child is ready to make a decision, spend time praying with the child. When the child is ready to commit his life to Christ, allow the child to pray. You may ask the child to repeat a prayer after you or allow the child to pray for himself. If a parent is present, you may want to allow the parent the opportunity to lead her child in prayer. A sample prayer might be:

*"Dear Lord,  
I know I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness.  
I repent of my sins and ask You to forgive me. I  
confess You as my Lord and receive You as my  
Savior. Thank You for giving me eternal life. In  
Jesus' name I pray, Amen."*

- **Remember, let God be in charge.** Trust God to work the miracle of Christian conversion that only He can. If the child is not ready, accept that and don't push the child to make a decision.
- **Avoid using fear tactics with the child.** Some well-meaning adults have said, "Unless you accept Christ, you will burn in hell." Statements such as these are not appropriate or helpful when talking with a child.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

- **Finally, plan to follow up with the child.** Leading a child to Christ is not the end of your responsibility. It is necessary for you to follow up with the child and parent.

How comfortable are you in sharing the plan of salvation with adults? Children's Sunday School teachers must not be concerned only with the spiritual lives of their students, but with the students' family members as well. The FAITH presentation is a great ministry tool to assist you in becoming comfortable with sharing God's plan of salvation with teens and adults.

### A Step of FAITH

In your personal opinion, what do you understand it takes for a person to go to heaven? Consider how the Bible answers this question. It is a matter of FAITH.

### F is for FORGIVENESS

We cannot have eternal life and heaven without God's forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7a).

### A is for AVAILABLE

Forgiveness is available. It is—

- available for all (John 3:16).
- not automatic (Matthew 7:21a).

### I is for IMPOSSIBLE

It is impossible for God to allow sin into heaven.

- Because of who He is, God is loving and just. His judgment is against sin, (James 2:13a).
- Because of who we are, every person is a sinner (Romans 3:23).

But how can a sinful person enter into heaven, where God allows no sin?

### T is for TURN

Turn means *repent*.

- Turn from something—sin and self (Luke 13:3b).
- Turn to Someone; trust Christ only (1 Corinthians 15:3b-4; Romans 10:9).

### H is for HEAVEN

Heaven is eternal life.

Here . . . (John 10:10b).

Hereafter . . . (John 14:3).

How?

How can a person have God's forgiveness, heaven and eternal life, and Jesus as personal Savior and Lord? This can happen only by trusting in Christ and asking Him for

forgiveness. Take the step of faith described by another meaning of FAITH: Forsaking All I Trust Him. Then tell someone about the important decision you have made. Grow in your faith and enjoy new friends in Christ. Become part of His church and attend the Sunday School class the church has prepared just for you.

The evangelistic presentation that is taught in FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy® training is designed to be used with adults. (For more information about the FAITH process, call toll free 1-877-324-8498.)

Children come to understand the gospel best through relationships. As a Children's Sunday School teacher, it is through relationships you develop with the child that an opportunity to share the gospel is provided.

### My Teaching Environment

"My classroom is just too small to do the activities called for in the curriculum." Have you ever felt this way? Many of us have a wonderful classroom in which to teach, while others may feel their classrooms are less than adequate. The classroom in which you teach plays a very large part in the teaching process. The room begins teaching even before anything verbal takes place. What is your room saying?

Rooms that feel good and look good make a difference to both teachers and students. Think about your classroom. How does it measure up to the following?

### My room . . .

- is clean, neat, and attractive.
- is well lit but not too bright.
- is painted in a quiet, smooth color that does not over-stimulate the children.
- is equipped with the correct size and amount of furniture to meet the physical needs of the children.
- has ample storage areas for all ministries using the room.
- is not cluttered. There is ample space for the children to move from one activity to another.
- is arranged to provide as much space and freedom of movement as possible.
- has appropriate teaching pictures and other current materials displayed at the eye level of the children.
- provides at least 25 square feet per child.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

### Basic Equipment and Furnishings for Children's Classrooms

#### *Chairs*

- First and second grades—12-13 inches from the floor
- Third and fourth grades—14-15 inches from the floor
- Fifth and sixth grades—16-17 inches from the floor

#### *Tables*

- Tabletops should be 10 inches above the chair seat.
- Rectangular tables with waterproof tops and adjustable legs (approximately 36 by 54 inches) are suggested.
- One table is needed for every six chairs, though not all chairs need to be placed at the table.
- Kidney-shaped tables are not recommended because they are not easily stored.

### Other Resources

- Open shelves for displaying resources and storing Bibles, hymnals, Bible dictionaries, or atlases make these resources easily available for children to use.
- Bulletin boards mounted 24-30 inches from the floor may be used to add color to the classroom. Change bulletin boards on a regular basis and use them to strengthen the teaching environment. Display teaching pictures on the boards as well as the children's artwork.
- Chalkboards or white boards allow teachers and children a place to write.
- Supply cabinets allow teachers to store materials in the room for easy access. Cabinets should be cleaned on a regular basis and organized in a user-friendly manner.

### Moment 2 Reflect

Think about your classroom. On a blank piece of paper, draw your present classroom setup. How many chairs and tables are in the room? How many do you need? Are the chairs sized appropriately for the children in the class/department? Is there a bulletin board you change on a regular basis? What first impression does your classroom give the children? What first impression does your classroom provide guests? Does your classroom communicate active learning and fun for children without overstimulating them?

### My Lesson Preparation

Another important aspect of teaching is the amount of time you set aside to prepare for Sunday morning. Read and answer each of the following questions:

1. What day of the week do I begin preparing for Sunday morning?
2. How much time do I spend each week preparing for Sunday morning?
3. What is the most difficult aspect of preparing for Sunday morning?
4. What is the most difficult aspect of leading the class on Sunday morning?

Over the past year, I have asked teachers these four questions. The following is a compilation of their answers. The day most teachers listed to begin preparation is Thursday. The average amount of time spent for preparation is 1-3 hours. The most difficult aspect of preparation is finding creative ways to make the Bible story come alive for the children. You probably can guess the most difficult aspect of leading the class—behavior. As I question teachers, an interesting aspect continues to surface. Teachers who spend more than two hours preparing for Sunday morning have fewer behavior issues than teachers who spend less than two hours preparing.

God has called you to be a Children's Sunday School teacher. With that calling comes a responsibility to prepare, to get to know the children, and to learn as much as you can about children's developmental issues.

### My Personal Preparation

The *Encounter* materials in the leader guide are provided for you, the teacher. They are designed to help you understand the background of the Bible passage you will be teaching. As you prepare, don't skip over this material. It will strengthen your teaching time as well as your own spiritual growth.

How do you use the materials your church provides to strengthen your teaching? Consider the following seven-day preparation schedule:

**Sunday Afternoon:** From your Bible, read the Scripture passage for the next week. As you read the passage, ask the question, "God, what are you trying to teach me through

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

this passage?" I believe that before we, as Children's Sunday School teachers, can teach the Bible passage so that it transforms the life of a child, it first must transform our lives. As you allow God to work through your life, you will discover new aspects of the passage you may have never understood or experienced.

**Monday:** Read the *Life Impact* and the *Encounter* material for the lesson. Ask God to reveal to you how to make the lesson come alive for the children in your class/department. Pray for each child by name.

**Tuesday:** Read the *Prepare* section of the leader guide and the *Church* and *Home* pages from the learner guide. Make a list of the materials you will need to teach the lesson this coming Sunday. Finally, begin gathering the materials.

**Wednesday:** Pray for the parents of the children in your class/department and your coworkers.

**Thursday:** Reread the Scripture passage and the *Continue* activities.

**Friday:** Pray for God's guidance as you teach the lesson.

**Saturday:** Review your teaching outline, Scripture passage, and gather any last-minute materials.

**Sunday Morning:** Guide the learning experiences you have prepared.

Does this seem like a lot of time? On the average, this lesson preparation takes 20-25 minutes a day. That is a total of two to three hours a week. Try it for a while to see if it makes a difference in your teaching time.

As you teach, continually ask yourself the question, *Am I filling the children's heads full of Bible knowledge that does not translate into spiritual transformation, or am I teaching in such a way that the children can apply the Bible truth to their lives?* It is important for children to know facts about the Bible, but it is more important that children learn to apply Bible facts to their lives. This means that your teaching is not just for the head, but for the heart as well.

Probably one of the first verses children learn is "God is love" (1 John 4:7-8). But what does this verse really mean?

In the space below, write your meaning of the thought "God is love."

Does it mean that God loves everyone? Yes. Does it mean that God loves you? Yes.

Far too many times, Sunday School teachers have settled for simply "covering the lesson," meaning that they completed all the activities in the leader guide. Have you stopped to think, *How has this impacted the life of a child?* And not just a child but a specific child? What about Jason, Anderson, or Samantha? Fill in the names of the children you teach. How has the lesson impacted their lives?

Children today are smart. They can give you the answers to a lot of questions. If they don't know the answers, they have access to computers that can research and find the answers within seconds. Yet, head knowledge is not enough. The Pharisees had the head knowledge, but they lacked the heart knowledge.

### Moment2Reflect

Read Proverbs 22:17-21 and 23:12. What do these verses tell you about application?

### Organizing to Teach Children

How is your Children's Sunday School organized? Is it organized to provide space for newcomers? Is there proper teacher/child ratios? Is it time to multiply your class/department by beginning a new class/department? These three questions will help you as you strive to multiply your ministry over the next year.

Here are a few facts to remember:

- A minimum of two adult leaders is necessary for every children's class/department.
- Each child needs 25 square feet for active learning.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

- One adult teacher is needed for every six children.
- Maximum enrollment for a Children's Sunday School department is 24.

The following charts will help you organize your children for the greatest impact. Examine each of the charts. Which chart describes your current Sunday School group?

### Option 1 Grades 1-6

#### Characteristics

- a small group of children ranging from grades 1-6
- minimum of two adult teachers (maintain a one-to-six ratio)
- less than 25 children enrolled or on the prospect list.  
When enrollment reaches 25, the class needs to multiply.
- children's class director serves as a teacher
- uses broadly-graded curriculum

### Option 2 Grades 1-3      Grades 4-6

#### Characteristics

- less than 25 children enrolled or on the prospect list in grades 1-3 and grades 4-6. When enrollment reaches 25, the class needs to multiply.
- minimum of two adults as teachers in each class (maintain a one-to-six ratio)
- each department has a director and teacher
- uses broadly-graded curriculum

### Option 3 Division Director

#### Grades 1-2      Grades 3-4      Grades 5-6

#### Characteristics

- less than 25 children enrolled or on the prospect list in grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6. When enrollment reaches 25, the class needs to multiply.
- minimum of two adult teachers in each department (maintain a one-to-six ratio)
- Each department has a director and one or more teacher(s).
- uses closely-graded curriculum

### Option 4 Division Director(s)

#### Grade 1      Grade 2      Grade 3 Grade 4      Grade 5      Grade 6

#### Characteristics

- less than 25 children enrolled or on the prospect list in each individual group for grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.  
When enrollment reaches 25, the class needs to multiply.
- minimum of two adult teachers in each department (maintain a one-to-six ratio)
- Each department has a director and multiple teachers.
- uses closely-graded curriculum

Note that Option 4 may be expanded for multiple departments of the same grade as the ministry continues to grow. Growing numbers and insufficient space sometimes can be taken care of by considering multiple Sunday School hours.

#### Moment 2 Reflect

Which option is best for you? Fill in the blanks below to discover which option might best fit your church's needs.

Grade	Children Enrolled	Prospects	Total Children	Teachers Needed
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
Total				

- If you have less than 25 children total for grades 1-6, you may consider using Option 1.
- If you have more than 25 children total for grades 1-6 but less than 25 children in either grades 1-3 and 4-6, you may consider using Option 2.
- If you have more than 25 children total for grades 1-3 and 4-6 but less than 25 children in any group for grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6, you may consider using Option 3.
- If you have more than 25 children total in grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6 but less than 25 children in each individual grade, you may consider using Option 4. Remember, Option 4 can consist of multiple classes for the same grade.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

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## HOW DO I EVALUATE?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

Look back at the previous chart. What do you expect your enrollment and prospect list to be in one year? Are you planning for growth? If you are close to having 25 children enrolled or on your prospect list, it is time to consider expanding the class. Don't wait until you have 23 children to make plans to multiply.

### **Summary**

In summary, there are three *S's* to be aware of in Children's Sunday School.

Is your Sunday School . . .

SAFE (environment)?

SECURE (loving atmosphere)?

SATISFYING (for the children, teachers, and parents)?

### **Moment 2 Reflect**

Evaluate your Sunday School based on the three *S's*. What do you need to improve in any of these areas? Write your ideas in the space below.



# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## CHAPTER 4: HOW DO I PLAN?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

When my children were younger, one of my favorite movies to watch with them was *An American Tale*. If you don't remember, the plot centered on a community of mice being threatened by a sinister rat and his gang. The mice needed help to rid themselves of these menacing rats. In a huge gathering of the mice, a leader stepped to the platform and announced in her most heroic, victorious voice, "We have a plan!" With that announcement, the mice began to cheer and shout in great celebration. With a plan came the hope of victory.

Another favorite is Lucy from the *I Love Lucy* show. Each episode seemed to focus on Lucy getting into some kind of trouble and then turning to Ethel with the words, "Ethel, I have a plan!" Of course, rather than cheering in celebration, Ethel usually turned to run because Lucy's plans often created even greater problems. Unrealistic plans don't give much hope for victory.

Real life, as well as movies and television, involves planning on a daily basis. Kids playing sandlot football etch their plans for victory on the ground. Of course, almost all drawings are accompanied by the last-second whisper, "Go long toward the big tree, and I'll throw it to you." Moms plan their busy days as they decide how to get Jennifer to ballet at 4:00 and Kyle to soccer at 4:30, make a grocery store run in between, pick up everyone, and get back home in time to prepare an evening meal. Planning is high on their priority lists, and they become professionals at it. As a matter of fact, moms should organize the world because no one can get as much accomplished in one day as a mom. What is a greater wonder is that most moms accomplish these unbelievable feats without handheld computers.

In the worlds of fantasy and reality, planning is evidenced as an essential ingredient of each day. Everyone plans one way or another. In addition, wherever a plan is spotted, a purpose will not be far from view. The plan is directed at achieving something. The mice wanted freedom from the rats, Lucy wanted to get out of trouble; the offense wanted a touchdown; and moms wanted to return home and be able to account for everyone.

Webster defines *plan* as "a method for achieving an end."<sup>1</sup> Being an effective children's teacher requires planning or devising a method for achieving an end. What is the "end" or goal you desire in your teaching ministry? Before reading any further, answer the question in this blank space.

### Moment 2 Reflect

My goal for teaching children is

The purpose of this chapter is to provide help in developing and achieving ministry goals for teaching children. Two general strategic planning goals lay the foundation for achieving the end result of effective Bible study for children. The first of these planning goals focuses on the teacher, while the second focuses on the children. If you agree with these goals for your ministry with children, sign in the space provided after each goal as a symbol of your commitment.

**Strategic Goal 1: To grow more like Christ in my attitudes and actions and to improve my skills for teaching children**

---

Signature

**Strategic Goal 2: To help each child build the foundation necessary for making a personal decision to receive Christ as Savior when the Holy Spirit moves in his life, and to help each child grow more Christlike in his attitudes and actions**

---

Signature

The ministry actions for the year should grow out of these two strategic planning goals. Read the goals again. Pause for a time of prayer, asking God to empower you to accomplish both goals this year.

### Planning Steps for Strategic Goal 1

#### Time 2 Evaluate

Reread Strategic Goal 1. Now rate yourself on this goal using a Scale of 1-10 (1=needs work, 10=completed) Write your score here. \_\_\_\_ Where would you like to be at the end of this year? \_\_\_\_ Hopefully, the last number you listed is

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I PLAN?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

higher than the first one. You now have a personal goal in this area. To experience growth toward meeting your goal, several specific action steps should be established.

### **Step 1: Implement a systematic approach to Bible study.**

Children's teachers must be studying the Bible on a personal level each week not just in preparation for the Sunday School class. Read Colossians 3:16. According to this verse, what should a believer be doing as he teaches others?

### **Moment 2 Reflect**

Rewrite the verse as though it were originally written to a Children's Sunday School teacher.

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to see that teaching others had to be preceded by a personal indwelling of His Word in the life of the teacher. What does the word "richly" in this verse say to you regarding the quality of the teacher's approach to personal Bible study? Are you "richly" allowing God's Word to dwell in your life? Now read 2 Timothy 2:15. Here Paul told Timothy that God approves of the teacher "who correctly handles the word of truth." A haphazard, hit-or-miss approach to Bible study does not result in correctly handling the truth. Spending time in God's Word and allowing Him to speak through it changes the way the believer views and lives life.

Both the *Family Bible Study* and *Bible Foundations* leader guides begin each session with a *Personal Bible Study* section. This Bible study is designed to provide teachers with an adult-focused Bible study each week. Through a personal encounter with God's Word, teachers come face-to-face with His expectations and instructions. God speaks to believers through His Word. Do you bypass the *Personal Bible Study* to get to the session for the children? Do you allow only enough time to go over the *Encounter* section for the children? Are you more focused on getting the session ready than receiving instructions from God? A teacher who has experienced the moving of God's Spirit in his life will be more effective in teaching children the Bible. God's changing, transforming power will flow through him and be witnessed by the children he teaches.

Oh, the children will not be able to explain the difference between an excited teacher and a boring one, but they certainly know which they prefer. Just ask them, if you want to know!

### **Step 2: Continue to grow in personal discipleship through participation in ongoing training opportunities and ministry projects.**

Being a disciple of Christ means being a constant learner. God uses numerous avenues to deliver His truth to Christians. Children's teachers who are open to participating in Christian educational opportunities discover a confident strength in their beliefs. This confidence prepares each teacher to work more effectively with children. Consider taking part in several of these learning experiences:

- basic doctrines of the church;
- how to share your testimony (Join a FAITH ministry team if your church is involved in FAITH.);
- how to talk with children about salvation;
- know what Baptists believe;
- how to study the Bible;
- how the Bible came to be;
- church history; and
- personal discipleship classes like *Experiencing God*, *Disciple's Prayer Life*, or *Jesus, the One and Only*.

### **Step 3: Enrich your understanding of children and how they learn.**

Children's teachers should attend training events to improve their understanding of children and how they learn. The next chapter will provide more detail on training, but basically you can attend local, state, or national conference opportunities. These training programs are designed and taught by people who have extensive experience in teaching children. As you build your planning strategy, carefully consider how you might take part in these kinds of conferences.

In addition to attending conferences, children's leaders can create a plan for self-study. Numerous books are available to help teachers improve their teaching abilities.

The following resources are available from your nearest LifeWay Christian Store or through LifeWay Church Resources Customer Service (1-800-458-2772).

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- *Teaching Children: Laying Foundations for Faith*
- *Children's Sunday School for a New Century*
- *Understanding Today's Children*

Establishing and implementing a plan to study these resources will help improve the teaching-learning environment in which you teach.

### Time 2 Evaluate

Review the three action steps related to Strategic Goal 1 on the previous page. If you are ready to commit to taking these action steps, draw a star in the space before each step below. In the blank space beside each step, write one specific thing you can do to get started toward taking that step.

\_\_\_ **Step 1 Action:**

\_\_\_ **Step 2 Action:**

\_\_\_ **Step 3 Action:**

Now that you have worked through the action steps for Strategic Goal 1, let's move ahead to Strategic Goal 2.

### Planning Steps for Strategic Goal 2

Reread Strategic Goal 2 on page 21. As you read, personalize the goal by replacing the words "each child" with the name of a specific child in your department. Repeat this several times, adding a different name each time.

### Time 2 Evaluate

How will the lives of these children be changed when this goal is accomplished?

How will families, churches, and communities be influenced by this change both now and in the future?

The impact of an effective Bible study ministry to children is long-term. Generations yet unborn will be touched by the lives of today's children. In God's wonderful plan of spiritual growth, children's teachers have the privilege of influencing lives for years to come. Making the most of your ministry opportunities requires establishing several specific action steps.

### Step 1: Make adequate preparation for Sunday morning.

Advance preparation creates an environment more conducive to learning. As a starting point for teachers, weekly planning helps are provided in the *Leadership Meeting* section of the curriculum. Planning during this weekly meeting is focused on three main sections—*Focus on the Mission*, *Focus on Relationships*, and *Focus on Bible Study*. To help teachers stay on target and record plans made during this time, a monthly planning sheet is provided in the leader pack. Consider the following ideas as suggested elements of your weekly planning:

- Join with Paul as he prayed for the Ephesians, "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). Pray this for yourself, your fellow teachers, and the children. We cannot discover God's truth; He reveals it to us through His Spirit. Each teaching opportunity must begin with this prayer for revelation.
- Ask God to send you an intercessor who will pray specifically for your teaching ministry to children.
- Read the *Personal Bible Study* in the curriculum. Ask yourself the seven questions listed on the planning sheet in the leader pack under *Focus on Bible Study*. If you teach with others, discuss what God is saying to each of you from this passage.
- Review last week's Bible study and evaluate how the sessions relate. Think of how you can show this connection to the children.
- Evaluate last Sunday's session. How did the children respond to the learning activities? Are changes needed before the upcoming Sunday?
- Pray for each child in your Care4Kids group (see Step 3 on p. 25). Ask God to send other laborers to cross their paths. Pray not only for their salvation, but also for their spiritual maturity.
- Review attendance records and contact children who have been absent. Plan to make a home visit to any child

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

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who has been absent frequently.

- Read through the *Encounter* section of the leader guide. Highlight key insights you want to share with the children.
- If you teach with a group, meet together to discuss the following steps:
  - Determine who will lead each of these *Encounter*, sections: *Power Up*, *Plug In*, and *Personalize Bible Study*.
  - Discuss the needs of the children and their families. Pray for them by name.
  - Discuss the meaning of the Bible passage and what you want to teach the children.
- Gather supplies and resources for the activities you will lead on Sunday.
- Review the songs to be used. Sing each song with the other teachers.
- Remove any teaching resources that will not be used on Sunday.
- Discuss any special needs and how they can be met on Sunday.
- Work each activity you plan to lead to make sure you understand how to instruct the children.
- Learn the memory verse and review its relation to the session.
- Continue to pray for the children throughout the week.

Why is taking time to prepare to teach so important? The obvious answer is that God's Word is the most valuable information children will ever hear, and children deserve our best efforts. However, there are several not-so-obvious values for advanced preparation. Read the following list. Then in the space provided under Time 2 Evaluate, write the two values that are most meaningful to you and tell why you made those choices.

- The principles of learning are recognized and followed.
- The children become aware of where they are going, why they need to go, and how they can reach their destination.
- The teacher relates to the children with greater confidence.
- The teaching time is used to a much better advantage.
- Children are involved more meaningfully, and their participation becomes more purposeful.

- Many behavior problems are avoided.
- Methods, activities, and resources are utilized more appropriately, and greater variety is assured.
- The lesson pace is more easily regulated.
- The teacher finds it easier to evaluate his teaching procedure and to analyze the steps in which he needs improvement.
- The Bible is magnified, and God is honored.

### Time 2 Evaluate

My two most important planning values are . . .

Now write a brief paragraph to evaluate the way you have approached planning in the past. If you have never taught in Sunday School, think about any ministry in which you have been involved, and evaluate your planning efforts there.

Stop and ask the Lord to reveal areas for improvement as you continue this study.

### Step 2: Plan ways to partner with parents.

Many parents do not understand the importance of home experiences in the spiritual development of their children. Too often, the responsibility of teaching children about God has been delegated to the Bible study ministry of the church. Christian parents must be helped to see that such an arrangement is not the best, according to God's plan. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. In this passage, Moses gave directions to the people of Israel regarding the methods of spiritual instructions to use with their children. Those directions had a definite "home" focus.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

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### Moment 2 Reflect

Reread Deuteronomy 6:6-9. List several ways people are directed to teach children.

For Israel, God's primary plan for teaching children was in the home. For His people today, the plan has not changed. For better or worse, parents are the greatest influence in the lives of their children.

Do you recall the discussion in Chapter 2 (pp. 5-6) that compared the "shifting sand" (10,608 hours) and "solid rock" (1,536 hours) messages influencing today's children? Parents are the key to changing those numbers. Children's teachers have the opportunity to help parents recognize their importance in the spiritual development of their children. As you plan to minister to parents and get them involved, consider these suggestions:

- See yourself as a parent educator.
- Know the names of each child's parents and pray for them weekly.
- Send parent letters to provide information on ways parents can help children grow spiritually.
- Invite parents to participate in the class or attend teacher-training conferences.
- Plan an open house to build relationships with parents.
- Help plan and implement churchwide parent training opportunities.
- Call parents and encourage the use of the *Home* page each week.
- Occasionally mail the *Home* page to parents.
- If your church is using the *Family Bible Study* curriculum, provide printed copies of the "Family Bible Time EXTRA!" This resource is available online at ([lifeway.com/extra](http://lifeway.com/extra)).
- Participate in outreach efforts to reach unchurched or inactive parents.

### Step 3: Build relationships with the children.

A conference leader once said, "Rules without relationships lead to rebellion." This same idea applies to teaching children in Sunday School. One avenue for learning in childhood is through relationships. As a child gets to know you, he becomes more open to receiving what you teach.

The child with discipline problems is more likely to follow your direction when a relationship is established. However, relationships don't just happen; they require time and planning. Consider these suggestions for helping build relationships with the children you teach.

- At the beginning of the year, implement a Care4Kids ministry. In this ministry, each enrolled child and prospect is assigned to a worker. The teacher-child ratio needs to be as small as possible. Teachers are responsible for determining the ministry needs of each child and caring for those needs appropriately.
- After creating Care4Kids ministry groups, schedule a home visit with each child in your group. Make the visit before the new Sunday School year begins. Use the "Child Information Form" (Item 16) during your visit to gather important information about each child. The more you know about the children, the deeper your relationship with each child will be.
- Establish a systematic approach for maintaining contact with each child throughout the year. Consider **contact 1•2•3** (Item 15) as an excellent ministry tool for achieving this goal.
- Pray each week for the children in your ministry group by name.

### Step 4: Calendar several ministry and fellowship events throughout the year.

A significant part of the spiritual growth process for children involves spending time ministering to the needs of others and building church relationships with other children. Ministry and fellowship are necessary functions of an effective Sunday School strategy. As you plan events, keep these tips in mind.

- Avoid times of the year when families tend to be overscheduled or vacationing.
- Include several parents in your planning process.
- Keep events far enough apart so that planning of one does not overlap the implementation of another.
- Check your church calendar. Look for ways to piggyback events with other age groups. Such planning helps parents with children of different ages.



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## HOW DO I PLAN?

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### September–October–November

- Plan a workday to clean the yard of a homebound church member.
- Schedule a family night party. Use this time for fun activities and to introduce the importance of parents teaching the Bible at home.
- Implement the fellowship idea located in the *Inside/Out* pages of the *Children's Family Bible Study* and *Bible Foundations* leader guides.
- Plan a fall festival as a substitute for the traditional Halloween experience. Give it a positive biblical theme to counter the ghosts and goblins of Halloween.
- Adopt a homebound member and plan ways to help that individual throughout the year.
- Plan an outreach afternoon. Invite the members of your class/department to visit prospects with you. Include parents for additional transportation, if needed. Remember to always have more than one child with you.

### December–January–February

- Adopt a needy family for Christmas.
- Collect food for your local crisis center. Arrange for the children to deliver the food and tour the center. Ask the center's director to describe the ministry for the children.
- Implement the fellowship idea located in the *Inside/Out* pages of the *Children's Family Bible Study* and *Bible Foundations* leader guides.
- Help plan and implement a special Bible study event such as January Bible Study.
- Collect Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® for International Missions.
- Encourage the children to send valentine cards to prospects and homebound members.
- Collect clothes for a homeless shelter. Arrange for the children to visit the shelter and deliver the clothes.

### March–April–May

- Organize an outreach activity and encourage the children to invite kids from their neighborhoods.
- Implement the fellowship idea located in the *Inside/Out* pages of the *Children's Family Bible Study* and *Bible Foundations* leader guides.
- Plan a parent-child kite day. Ask families to bring kites purchased from local stores or plan to build kites.
- Encourage the girls and boys to adopt a missionary or

become pen pals with a MK (missionary kid). Contact the International Mission Board for information.

- Schedule an outing to a nursing or retirement home. Help the children make simple craft gifts to distribute to the people staying there. Learn several simple songs for the children to share.
- Collect the Annie Armstrong Offering® for North American Missions.

### June–July–August

- Plan a swim day at a neighborhood pool.
- Involve children in planning Bible Clubs to reach unchurched children in your neighborhood. The *Down the Street and Around the World Bible Club* curriculum is designed to use in just such settings.
- Conduct a VBS blitz. Plan ways for children in your department to promote VBS on the streets where they live.
- Implement the fellowship idea located in the *Inside/Out* pages of the *Children's Family Bible Study* and *Bible Foundations* leader guides.
- Plan an end-of-the-year fellowship before the children are promoted to new departments in September.
- Plan a summer party for a group of children in the area. Contact your association office or local community organization to discuss possible groups for such a ministry.

### Time 2 Evaluate

Review the four action steps related to Strategic Goal 2. If you are ready to commit to taking these action steps, draw a star in the space before each step below. In the blank space beside each step, write one specific thing you can do to get started toward taking that step.

\_\_\_ Step 1 Action:

\_\_\_ Step 2 Action:

\_\_\_ Step 3 Action:

\_\_\_ Step 4 Action:



# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## CHAPTER 5: HOW DO I TRAIN?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

Each year, baseball players from all across the United States descend on Florida and Arizona. Do they come for the sun and fun these states promise? Do they come to enjoy the warm climate of the Sunshine State or to explore the adventures of the Grand Canyon? No, they come for Spring training. For a few weeks, both rookies and veterans return each year to fine-tune their skills and abilities.

From complete workouts, batting practice, introduction of new players, and a reminder of the basics of baseball, coaches strive to provide the very best training for their teams to prepare them for the season ahead. Coaches know that the better trained their players are, the better prepared they will be for the challenge which awaits them. One of the major goals of coaches at spring training is to develop a team spirit among the players. The team will play only as well as the team members support and encourage each other.

So what about you? You have been selected to serve on one of the most important teams in your church—the Children’s Sunday School team. Do you see yourself as a pitcher, a catcher, or an outfielder? On this team, there are no spectators. Everyone has a position to play and only you can fill your position. How prepared are you for the task ahead?

### Who Needs Training?

At spring training, all the players participate. It does not matter if the person has played for 10 years or is a rookie; he still must attend training. Experienced children’s teachers need to participate in training alongside new teachers. Through training, a team spirit is developed: experience is shared; and new relationships are developed.

### My Training Plan for 2002-2003

#### August (4 hours)

- Curriculum Usage
- Characteristics of Age Groups
- Teacher Responsibilities
- Using the Resource Room

#### September (1 hour)

- Ministering to Children and Their Families

#### October (1 hour)

- Ministering to Children with Special Needs

#### November (1 hour)

- Celebrating the Holidays with Children

If you are ready to commit to such a teaching plan, take a moment to pray the following prayer (or a similar one). Sign and date your commitment to acknowledge your accountability.

*Dear God,*

*Thank You for calling me into the teaching ministry with children. I know I don’t have all the answers to the questions the children will ask. I don’t even know if I know how to teach children, but I know You will guide me. This year, I commit to learning new things, to trying new ideas, and to attending training opportunities as they arise. Use me to touch the life of a child this year. Amen.*

*Signed*

*Date*

### Why Have Training?

The purpose of training is not only to equip people with the skills necessary to complete their tasks (the basics of Sunday School), but also to help them understand the demands and responsibilities of their commitments. Training is also a time of continued support and encouragement through the tasks. Training keeps the teaching team working under the same purpose and vision of the church. It insures that teachers are up-to-date on current trends and methodologies appropriate for teaching children.

### When Does Training Occur?

Training is an ongoing process and varies from church to church. When scheduling training events, check your church calendar so that there will be no conflict with other ministries. Some churches have weekly leadership training sessions on Sunday afternoon, while others utilize Wednesday evening. Remember, effective training does not occur on a single Sunday afternoon, but is continual.

Consider the following three examples of annual “spring training” events. (These usually are held in the fall, shortly before promotion.)

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### Midnight Madness

6:00—6:45 Dinner  
7:00—9:00 Training Session 1  
9:00—9:30 Team-building Activities  
10:00—12:00 Training Session 2

### Super Saturday Training

8:00—8:45 Breakfast  
9:00—10:30 Training Session 1  
10:30—10:45 Break  
10:45—12:00 Training Session 2

### In-service Sunday

2:00—3:45 Training Session 1  
4:00—5:15 Training Session 2  
5:15—6:00 Dinner  
6:00—8:00 Training Session 3

### *Tips on getting people to attend:*

- FEED them.
- Provide child care.
- Begin and end on time.
- Make the training worth the time and energy to attend.
- Allow for feedback.

### What Training Opportunities Are Available?

- Associational Training Events—Contact your associational office for dates and details.
- State Training Events—Contact your state office for dates and details.
- National Training Events—Sign up for Glorieta, Ridgecrest, and Green Lake.

### National Sunday School Leadership

#### Development Events

##### Glorieta, New Mexico

June 17-21  
June 21-24  
June 24-28

##### Ridgecrest, North Carolina

July 15-19  
July 19-22  
July 22-26

### Kingdom @ Work Church Leadership Development Event

Green Lake, Wisconsin  
July 1-5  
October 14-17

### Discipleship and Family Weeks

Ridgecrest, North Carolina  
June 29—July 5

##### Glorieta, New Mexico

July 20-26

### Ministers' Family Weekends

Ridgecrest, North Carolina  
June 21-24

##### Glorieta, New Mexico

July 5-8

### Music Week: "Worship and Music. . . A LifeWay Leader Event"

Ridgecrest, North Carolina  
June 15-21

##### Glorieta, New Mexico

July 13-19

### National Conference for Church Leadership

#### Ridgecrest, North Carolina

June 24-28

##### Glorieta, New Mexico

July 8-12

- National Preschool/Children's Convention—Held in October each year at LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN (October 14-17, 2002).
- Weekly Leadership Meetings—These are scheduled by your church leadership.
- Christian Growth Study Plan—These are independent study materials. For information, contact the Web site at ([www.lifeway.com/cgsp/catalog](http://www.lifeway.com/cgsp/catalog)).

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## HOW DO I TRAIN?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

### How Do I Begin Offering Training Events?

First observe your teaching team. Discover the strengths and weaknesses of the people presently serving. Then ask yourself, “How could we do better at reaching and ministering to more children and their families than we are currently doing?” A second option is to survey teachers to discover some of the areas in which they would like to receive training.

Second, think through a year-long training schedule. Remember, not all training can or should be done on one day. Develop a calendar of topics and publicize the topics. Keep in mind that training must be worth both the time and energy required for people to attend.

Third, develop a list of qualified people to lead your training events. You do not have to lead all of the training events yourself. Network with other church leaders, and state or national leadership to assist in training events.

Schedule the event on the church calendar and publicize the event with the teaching team. It is a great reminder to personally call each teacher to remind her of the training opportunity a few days before the event.

### Moment 2 Reflect

Begin by partnering with one person. The Bible gives us several examples of partnerships, but probably none as thorough as Paul and Timothy. The relationship these two men developed gives us a pattern we need to model. Paul took Timothy under his care and made sure he was trained for the ministry to which God had called him. Far too often, we are guilty of finding people who are called to teach children, but we simply put them in a classroom full of children, give them some curriculum, and say: “Here you go! Call me if you have any problems.” Do you understand how frustrated these people can become? Have you ever wondered why we have so much turnover in the Children’s Sunday School ministry?

But what can we do? One way we can strive to change this situation is to better train our workers before we place them in positions of leadership. In order to do that, we need to mentor them. Just as Timothy was mentored by Paul, we need to mentor others in their new adventure with children.

### How Does Mentoring Happen?

We need only to look at the life of Christ to see mentoring

in action. For more than three years, He provided His disciples with genuine on-the-job training. He spent time teaching them, praying with them, listening to them, and lovingly correcting them when they messed up. He provided them every resource they would need to succeed.

Don’t you want to teach like Jesus? Do you see yourself investing in the lives of others the way He did? If so, you are multiplying your ministry in ways that very few people today are using. Investing in the life of another is a task every Children’s Sunday School teacher should undertake.

The following list will provide you with qualities to look for in selecting a person to mentor.

- ☐ First, look for someone who is called to teach children. Without being called to teach children, the person is serving in the wrong ministry. As you talk with the person, ask him what he is looking for in his ministry. Overview the possibilities and responsibilities of teaching children. At this level of selection, the commitment level for both you and the person is low. Share your intentions for the partnership and offer an invitation to observe in the class you are teaching.
- ☐ Second, ask the person for a commitment. You will need to determine how long the commitment will be and what will be expected of the commitment. Most commitments at this level are three to six months long. They include observing and fulfilling small tasks as the mentor feels the person being mentored is capable of achieving. Strive for the person being mentored to feel successful and needed in the tasks assigned.
- ☐ Third, ask the person you are mentoring to commit to a deeper level of involvement. At this point in the mentoring relationship, the person being mentored is assigned a deeper level of responsibility. He may serve as the department director for a few weeks to oversee the responsibilities of the director, or he may function as a lead teacher.
- ☐ The final stage is the releasing stage. At this point, the mentoring relationship is completed. The person is now ready to fill a position of leadership. An important part of the mentoring relationship is to build into the mentoree the responsibility of mentoring someone else, just as she was mentored. The original mentor now begins the process over with another mentoree while still reaffirming the new teacher.

# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

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## HOW DO I TRAIN?

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### Moment 2 Reflect

List three people who would be great Children's Sunday School teachers who are not currently teaching.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- ☐ Over the next week, pray specifically for each of the names you listed. Ask God to show you which one you could mentor for the next three to six months.
- ☐ Call the person and set up a time for you to meet face-to-face with the person God has revealed to you.
- ☐ Ask the person to pray about the possibility of becoming a Children's Sunday School teacher. At this point, do not ask for a commitment other than prayer.
- ☐ Revisit the person to ask for his commitment.
- ☐ Develop a plan for mentoring and encouraging the person.

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## MY CHECKLIST FOR TRAINING

This year, I plan to attend the following training events:

\_\_\_\_\_ Associational Training Events

Date:

Location:

\_\_\_\_\_ State Training Events

Date:

Location:

\_\_\_\_\_ National Training Events

Glorieta:

Ridgecrest:

Green Lake:

\_\_\_\_\_ Weekly Leadership Training

\_\_\_\_\_ Christian Growth Study Plan

List of courses:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## A YEAR'S WORTH OF TRAINING EVENTS

Month	Date and Time	Topic	Leader	Notes
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
January				
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				



# MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY

## CHAPTER 6: HOW DO I START?

## BEYOND THE WALLS

You have all the curriculum material you need. You have your list of children. You know where the classroom you will be teaching in is located. Now the question is, “How do you start?” Getting started in the right direction will have a positive effect on your ministry over the next year.

A great starting place is to reread the material included in this book. As you read, make sure you take time to stop and reflect on each of the various issues.

The following suggestions will assist you as you prepare to take your first steps into the new Sunday School year.

### Before the First Sunday

Begin building a relationship with the other teachers in your department. Set up a time to meet together to get acquainted and plan. If possible, meet in the classroom in which you will be teaching. Share your testimonies with each other and why you feel God has called you to teach children.

Being building a relationship with each of the children in your department. Divide the list of children into equal groups, depending on the number of teachers in your department (Care4Kids). Contact each of the children by letter or phone and introduce yourself. Before the first Sunday of the new year, make it a priority to visit in the home of each of the children on your list. As you visit, share some information about yourself with the parents of the child.

Prepare your materials. Revisit the classroom in which you will be teaching. Recycle the out-of-date materials, file teaching pictures and reusable pack items, and organize your supplies. Become familiar with the resource room and how supplies are stored, checked out, and returned.

### Becoming Familiar with the Curriculum

Each of the leader guides follow a basic, simple-to-use format. Open your guide to the first page of a session. On the left side of the page, you will notice a column with several bold headings. These headings provide an overview of the session. Read through the definition of each of these headings.

**Bible Passage:** Location of the Bible passage being studied during this session

**Biblical Setting:** The background setting of the Bible story being studied in this session

**Biblical Truth:** A statement of the session’s focus

**Life Impact:** A brief statement identifying ways children will give evidence of spiritual transformation in their lives and/or contribute to Christ’s work through His church that could come as a result of this study. Unlike a session outcome goal intended to be completed during that session, a life impact goal might take weeks, months, or years to ultimately be accomplished.

**Life Question:** A question which helps children grasp the significance and relevance of the Scripture passage and biblical focus for their lives. It is phrased as if a child were asking himself the question and requires more than a yes or no answer.

Do you have an overview of the session? You should.

Continue to look at the session. You will notice there are several parts of the session.

### Parts of a Session

*Prepare* includes an interactive personal Bible study and commentary to help teachers prepare spiritually. Weekly leadership meeting suggestions help the teachers focus on the mission, relationships, and Bible study as they pray, fellowship, and plan with other leaders.

*Encounter* includes the teaching suggestions for the session. The session is designed for an hour of Bible study following a schedule made up of three parts:

*Power up for Bible Study* This 5- 10-minute activity is designed to set the stage for the day’s lesson, catch the attention of the children, and involve the children immediately as they arrive (*Bible Foundations—Get With It!*—10 minutes).

*Plug into Bible Study* This 25- 30-minute segment includes group worship, presentation of the Bible story, learning activities, and an introduction to the life impact for the session (*Bible Foundations—Get Into It!*—30-35 minutes).

*Personalize the Bible Study* This 20- 25-minute segment allows leaders and children to work in small groups. During

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this time, the children engage in learning activities that reinforce the learning and personalize the life impact of the lesson's Bible truth (*Bible Foundations—Go With It!*—15-20 minutes).

*Continue* offers suggestions on how to continue the Bible learning throughout the week, with attention to both the child and leader's spiritual growth.

Now open your leader pack. You will discover a variety of resources at your fingertips. Included are games, unit banners, memory verse aids, a CD-ROM, and much more. Take a few minutes to look through the materials. At the bottom of each resource, you will find a large number. This number indicates which week you will need that resource.

If you are using the *Family Bible Study Closely-Graded* materials, you also will have teaching pictures available for your use. Located on the back of each teaching picture are teacher helps to assist you throughout the session. (Some pictures are included in *Bible Foundations* and the *Broadly-Graded Family Bible Study Leader Pack*.)

Memory verse booklets are available for the *Family Bible Study* curriculum. These booklets are designed to assist the children in learning their weekly memory verse. These booklets need to be ordered only once a year.

### Preparing for the First Sunday

OK, you have met with your other teachers. You have visited in the home of each of the children in your department. You have become familiar with the curriculum resources. Now what do you do?

Your next step is to begin preparing for the first Sunday you will teach. Look back at the information in Chapter 3 "My Lesson Preparation" (p. 17). Use this information as a guide to prepare yourself and the Bible passage to be studied.

### The First Sunday

The first few minutes of a session will set the tone for the remainder of the morning. Read through the following suggestions for making Sunday morning the best it can be.

- Go to bed early on Saturday night. This will ensure that you are well rested for Sunday morning.
- Get up early on Sunday morning to avoid rushing yourself and your family.
- Begin the day with prayer. Pray for yourself, your family, your co-teachers, the children, and their families.
- Arrive at church early enough to prepare last-minute arrangements to your classroom.
- Give yourself time to take a break and catch your breath before children begin to arrive. This may mean a walk through the hallways or a bathroom break.
- Be prepared for the first child. Remember, teaching begins the minute the first child arrives.
- Greet the children at the door with a warm smile and hug. Call the children by name and direct them to the first activity.

Once you become familiar with these suggestions, the weeks will begin to fly by. It will be time for a new group of children before you know it. Take advantage of each Sunday to build lasting relationships with the children you teach.

### Carrying the Ministry Past Sunday Morning

Children's Sunday School teachers should not see their responsibility limited to one hour on Sunday morning. Teaching children does not limit you to just children. One of the joys of your ministry is ministering to the families of the children you teach. Make family ministry an important part of your weekly ministry. Phone calls, cards, and visits are three great ways to encourage parents to continue the Bible study you have begun.

### For the Veteran Teacher

Everything we have talked about in this book may seem very basic to you. That's great. Once you have conquered the basics, it is time to move on to the next level. What is that level? For you, it is to multiply yourself. Have you enlisted someone to mentor? Are you training someone to reach more children and families? For you, the veteran teacher, it is your responsibility to encourage and motivate new leaders as they discover the joys and experience the successes and struggles of teaching.

# CHRISTIAN GROWTH STUDY PLAN

In the **Christian Growth Study Plan (formerly Church Study Course)**, the text file “Multiply Your Children’s Ministry” in *Beyond the Walls: Multiply Your Ministry Sunday School Annual Planner and CD* is a resource for course credit in one (1) Leadership and Skill Development diploma plan. To receive credit, read the text, complete the activities, show your work to your pastor, a staff member or church leader, then complete the information on the form below. The form may be duplicated. Send the completed page to:

**Christian Growth Study Plan  
One LifeWay Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37234-0117  
FAX: (615)251-5067  
Email: cgspnet@lifeway.com**

For information about the Christian Growth Study Plan, refer to the current Christian Growth Study Plan Catalog. Your church office may have a copy. If not, request a free copy from the Christian Growth Study Plan office (615/251-2525). Also available online at [www.lifeway.com/cgsp/catalog](http://www.lifeway.com/cgsp/catalog).

**The following course number may be used to request credit toward the Leadership and Skill Development diploma plan which includes this resource.**

- ☐ The Administration of Children’s Ministries  
(Sunday School) (LS-0013)

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Rev. 10-01

Social Security Number (USA Only-optional)		Personal CGSP Number*		Date of Birth (Mo., Day, Yr.)	
		-		-	
Name (First, MI, Last)				Home Phone	
Address (Street, Route, or P.O. Box)				City, State, or Province	
				Zip/Postal Code	

## CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Name		
Address (Street, Route, or P.O. Box)		City, State, or Province
		Zip/Postal Code

## CHANGE REQUEST ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Former Name		
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Address	City, State, or Province	Zip/Postal Code
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Church	City, State, or Province	Zip/Postal Code
Signature of Pastor, Conference Leader, or Other Church Leader		Date

\*New participants are requested but not required to give SS# and date of birth. Existing participants, please give CGSP# when using SS# for the first time. Thereafter, only one ID# is required. **Mail To:** Christian Growth Study Plan, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0117. Fax: (615)251-5067.